

Message Text

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15

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 AF-10 IO-14 CU-04 /118 W

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R 231556Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7514

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD UNN

USINT DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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EO 11652: N/A DECON 4/23/75

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, EG, LY

SUBJECT: BEIRUT PRESS REPORTING ON EGYPTIAN MILITARY ACADEMY
INCIDENT

REF: CAIRO 2472 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: BEIRUT PRESS IS CARRYING WHAT ARE ALLEGED TO BE FURTHER
DETAILS RE ATTACK ON EGYPTIAN MILITARY ACADEMY, WITH LIBYAN-BACKED
PAPERS PLAYING UP LARG'S PROTESTATIONS OF NON-INVOLVEMENT AND
PORTRAYING ENTIRE AFFAIR AS RESULT OF INTERNAL "CONFLICTS, CONFUSION
AND TENSION" WITHIN EGYPT GENERATED BY SADAT'S POLICIES. REPORT IN
ANOTHER PAPER KNOWN FOR ITS GOOD SOURCES IN GOE CLAIMS THAT
INCIDENT WAS FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY AN ABORTIVE ASSASSINATION AT-
TEMPT AGAINST SADAT HIMSELF. END SUMMARY.

1. NUMEROUS PAPERS HERE CARRIED APRIL 22 LIBYAN NEWS AGENCY
(ARNA) RELEASE CLAIMING THAT APRIL 18 ATTACK ON MILITARY TECHNICAL
ACADEMY NEAR CAIRO WAS MOUNTED BY EGYPTIAN CLANDESTINE ORGANI-
ZATION CALLED "MUHAMMAD YOUTH" ("SHABA MUHAMMAD") AND
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THAT, IN CONTRAST TO INITIAL EGYPTIAN CLAIMS THAT IT WAS INSTIGATED

BY FOREIGN ELEMENTS, IT CONSISTED OF MUTINY BY ACADEMY CADETS WHO, AFTER HAVING FORCIBLY SEIZED ARMS FROM SCHOOL ARMORY, PLANNED TO MARCH ON PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY WHERE SADAT WAS SCHEDULED TO MAKE SPEECH. ARNA NOTED THAT FAILURE OF THIS EFFORT (WHICH LOCAL LIBYAN-BACKED AS SAFIR DESCRIBES AS BEGINNING OF ATTEMPTED INTERNAL COUP AGAINST SADAT REGIME) HAS BROUGHT ABOUT WIDE WAVE OF ARRESTS OF MILITARY OFFICERS AND STUDENTS CHARGED WITH MEMBERSHIP IN "MUHAMMAD YOUTH".

2. AS SAFIR ON APRIL 22 QUOTED QADHAFI AS DEPLORING APRIL 18 ATTACK AND EXPRESSING SURPRISE AT EFFORTS BY EGYPTIANS TO LINK LIBYA WITH SUCH A "SUSPICIOUS OPERATION" WHICH "SERVES INTERESTS OF ENEMIES OF ARAB NATION". PAPER SAID LIBYAN OFFICIALS HAD CONFIRMED THAT ATTACK'S ALLEGED INSTIGATOR, PALESTINIAN ENGINEER IDENTIFIED AS DR. SALEH ABDULLAH SARIYAH, HAD ONCE "PASSED THROUGH LIBYA", BUT THEY POINT OUT THIS DOES NOT JUSTIFY CONNECTING HIM WITH LARG. ON APRIL 23, SAFIR, CLAIMED THAT WAVE OF ANTI-PALESTINIAN FEELING HAD DEVELOPED IN EGYPT AS RESULT OF EGYPTIAN PRESS TREATMENT OF WHOLE AFFAIR, AND THAT PLO OFFICIALS HAVE PROTESTED TO GOE ABOUT THIS.

3. EDITORIALY, SAFIR SAID IT ALWAYS EASY TO BLAME SUCH INDIDENTS ON FOREIGN INFLUENCE, BUT THAT ACADEMY ATTACK CLEARLY STEMMED FROM "STATE OF CONFUSION, TENSION, ANXIETY, AND NATIONAL ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL DISCONTENT WHICH GRIPS EGYPTIAN PEOPLE WHO ...ARE SEEING FRUITS OF THEIR IMMENSE SACRIFICES PICKED BY FORCES HOSTILE TO NASSER AND GLORIOUS JULY REVOLUTION". CITING LONG LIST OF PREVIOUS OUTBURSTS OF POPULAR EGYPTIAN DIS-SATISFACTION WITH SADAT REGIME, SAFIR CHARGED SADAT WITH RESORT-ING TO "INSULTS, SLANDERS, ABUSE AND HATE AIMED AT STIRRING SE-DITION, DIVISIONS AND HOSTILITY AMONG EGYPTIAN PEOPLE AND IN RANKS OF ARAB NATION." "SUCH TACTICS", PAPER SAID, "ARE PURE SABOTAGE OF NATIONALIST UNITY, ARAB UNITY AND COMMON SENSE AT THIS MOST SERIOUS STAGE OF OUR HISTORY".

4. AT SAME TIME, GENERALLY PRO-CAIRO AL ANWAR ON APRIL 23 CITED "RELIABLE ARAB SOURCES" TO EFFECT THAT APRIL 18 INCIDENT WAS FAR MORE THAN ISOLATED EVENT CARRIED OUT BY SMALL BANK OF LUNATICS. PAPER SAID SADAT WAS DRIVING AFTERNOON APRIL 18 TO VISIT SCENE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OF ATTACK AT HELIOPOLIS ACADEMY WHEN HIS MOTORCADE CAME UNDER DIRE FROM OTHER "SUBVERSIVE ELEMENTS". ALLEGEDLY, AS MANY AS 20 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND "DOZENS" WOUNDED, WITH FOUR PRESIDENTIAL BODYGUARDS AMONG THE DEAD. APPARENTLY SHAKEN, SADAT REPORTEDLY WENT STRAIGHT TO HIS REST HOUSE AT CAIRO BARRAGES AND FAILED TO SHOW UP LATER AT CAIRO AIRPORT TO GREET VISITING SUDANESE PRESIDENT NIMEIRI. ANWAR CLAIMED NIMEIRI PHONED SADAT SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL TO CONGRATULATE HIM FOR ESCAPING UNHARMED FROM ASSAS-

SINATION PLOT.

5. COMMENT: WE OF COURSE HAVE NO WAY OF EVALUATING ANWAR
REPORT OR LIBYAN-INSPIRED ALLEGATIONS OUTLINED ABOVE, BUT EMBASSY
CAIRO MAY FIND THEM USEFUL IN ASSESSING WHAT, IF ANYTHING, LAY
BEHIND APRIL 18 ATTACK ON HELIOPOLIS ACADEMY.
GODLEY

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